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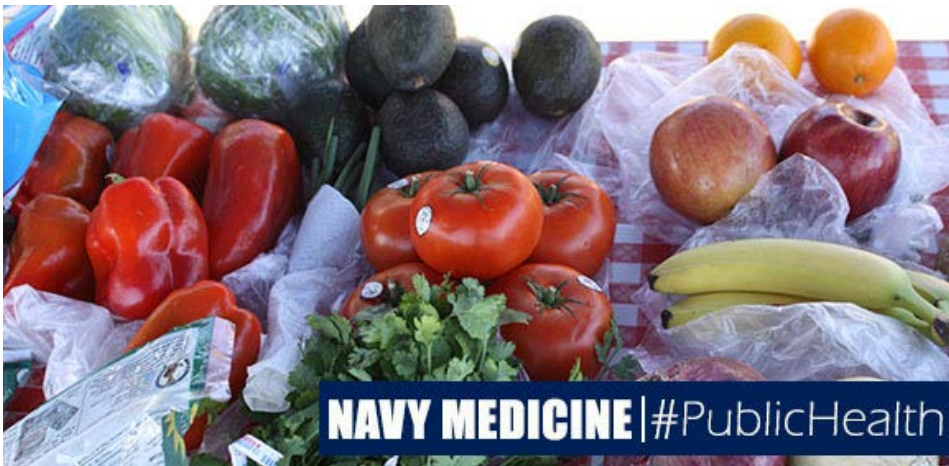
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Shop for Foods that are Heart Healthy

Filed under [HEATH](#)

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You may already know that foods laden with fats, refined sugars, and sodium can increase your risk of heart disease. Still, identifying food items that are good for your cardiovascular health can be challenging.

Foods that are rich in fiber and omega-3 fatty acids are considered particularly heart healthy, according to numerous papers by the [National Institutes of Health](#) in Bethesda, Md. and several studies. Both soluble fibers – typically found in legumes and some fruits and vegetables – and insoluble fibers – found in whole grains and many vegetables – support heart health. Eating fiber-rich foods is good for more than just your waistline, but what does this mean in practical terms for your shopping list?

By keeping the following tips in mind next time you shop at the commissary or grocery store, you will be an educated consumer, and your heart will thank you.

Vegetables and Fruits

Vegetables and fruits are rich in vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber, while containing few calories. Consuming produce supports a heart healthy lifestyle and the more you eat, the less you'll be tempted to fill up on unhealthy snacks. Choose a variety of vegetables of different colors for maximum nutrition. Save money by buying fruits and vegetables frozen or when they are in season.

Heart healthy vegetables include:

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- Asparagus
- Garlic
- Onions
- Carrots
- Beans, frozen or dried (kidney, pinto, garbanzo or navy)
- Tomatoes
- Broccoli
- Sweet potatoes
- Green peas
- Spinach and other leafy greens
- Corn
- Cauliflower
- Cabbage
- Brussels sprouts

Heart healthy fruits include:

- Apples
- Berries
- Oranges
- Pears
- Bananas
- Peaches
- Grapefruit

Whole Grains and Nuts

Certain grains and nuts are a great source of fiber and other nutrients. They also play a role in regulating blood pressure. Make sure to buy whole grain versions of bread, rice and pasta. Nuts like almonds and walnuts (unsalted) are a good source of Omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin E, which help reduce your risk of heart disease by lowering your blood pressure and boosting your immunity.

Meats, Fish and Milk

Red meats (beef, pork and lamb) have more cholesterol and saturated fat than chicken, fish and vegetable proteins like beans. Try to eat more chicken, fish and beans. Eating red meat in moderation is fine; just make sure you select lean pieces of meat and trim any excess fat before you prepare it.

Adding more fish to your diet is good for you; the American Heart Association recommends eating fish at least twice a week due to its abundance of omega-3. Recommended types of fish include salmon, herring, lake trout and albacore tuna.

Yogurt and milk provide much-needed protein and calcium. In addition, they are good for your gums and gut. Gum disease may elevate a person's risk for heart disease. Yogurt also provides you with probiotics. Cheese provides calcium and protein as well. Select dairy products that are lower in fat content. As with most foods, moderation is key.

Fats and Oils

Everyone needs some fats and oils in their diet. Although trans fat and saturated fat in foods may taste good, they wreak havoc on your heart. Examples include margarine, lard, fried foods and commercially baked goods. To be safe, limit your intake of these items and replace them with lean proteins and low-fat foods. If you want a snack, enjoy some almonds or sprinkle blueberries on some low-fat yogurt.

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Choose oils that are high in monounsaturated fat. Olive oil, canola oil and sunflower oil are all good choices. Baking, roasting, steaming or grilling meats or vegetables using “good fats” is a tasty way to get the right amount of fat in your diet.

Additional Information

For more information on selecting foods that are good for your cardiovascular health, please visit the following sites:

- [Choose My Plate](#)
- [American Heart Association](#)
- [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's “Keep the Beat” Deliciously Healthy Eating Operation Live Well](#)

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